



# Secure Commonwealth Panel

October 10, 2012 - Richmond

Attendees: Terrie Suit, Jessica Brooks, Carrie Roth, Marla Decker, Jim Duffey, Cathie Hutchins, Edward Macon, Dario Marquez, John O'Bannon, Jim Redick, Karen Remley, Cynthia Romero, Charles Werner.

## **Welcoming Remarks**

Terrie Suit, Chair, opened the meeting and thanked all for their attendance.

Introductions were made by the panel and audience.

## **Commercial Mobile Alert Services (CMAS) Research, Development, and Testing and Evaluation**

Denis A. Gusty, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, provided a presentation on transmission of emergency alerts over commercial mobile networks, including cellular and paging networks.

Please see the corresponding PowerPoint.

The CMAS has been operational on a national level since April. It is now the responsibility of the state and local officials on how to begin using the system. Michael Cline, State Coordinator for the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, indicated the paperwork to use the system in Virginia is being processed.

A question was asked concerning sending out pre-scripted messages to a target audience like only medical professionals – unfortunately, this system is not able to designate a target audience.

CMAS does have the capability to be incorporated into a local, established alerting system.

A major advantage of CMAS is the ability to contact out of state travelers while they are in the Commonwealth.

Depending upon how old your cell phone is, you might have to configure the phone to receive messages.

There is a nuclear regulatory requirement to have a supplement to the nuclear power plant's alerting systems in place other than the sirens. Dominion is working on one system to incorporate CMAS.

## **D Block Update**

Chris McIntosh, Interoperability Coordinator, and Chief Charles Werner, Fire Chief, City of Charlottesville, provided an update on the D Block.

The inability of first responders to communicate with each other was a critical failure on 9/11. To remedy this failure, the 9/11 Commission recommended legislation to provide for the expedited and increased assignment of radio spectrum for public safety purposes.

D Block is the allocation of an additional 10 MHz of radio spectrum—the “D block”—to the existing dedicated public safety spectrum. Public safety agencies would be able to use the D block spectrum to build a nationwide interoperable broadband spectrum, allowing diverse agencies to communicate with each other, and supporting mission critical voice, video, text, and other data transmissions.

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 was enacted into law. This legislation created the “First Responder Network Authority,” (FRNA) referred to as FirstNet. FirstNet will ensure the establishment of a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network.

FirstNet has developed a business model. Key concerns include the cost of operation and maintenance of the network.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has selected Virginia as a pilot program based on coverage area or loading.

The Commonwealth of Virginia needs to work quickly and closely with local officials on coordinating operations and implementation of the network. Chief Werner recommended that this be worked through the State Interoperability Executive Committee.

There is no time to build a network. The Commonwealth should leverage state assets and private investments to support public safety communications.

FirstNet has a very aggressive timeline. Each governor has the option to decide whether his or her state wants to conduct its own deployment of a broadband Radio Access Network (RAN). Specifically, once FirstNet is established and the Request for Proposal (RFP) process has been completed, states have 3 months to notify FirstNet of their intention to “opt-in” or “opt-out” of the FirstNet plan for that state. If a state decides to opt-out, it has 6 months to develop and complete its own RFP process for a broadband RAN within the state, subject to FCC approval.

Any revenue received from D Block will go back into funding this public safety network.

A governance structure needs to be set up in order to manage this process effectively.

## **Community Emergency Response Team Program**

Ted Costin, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, provided information on the Commonwealth’s Community Emergency Response Team program.

Please see the corresponding PowerPoint.

### **Medical Reserve Corps Program**

Jennifer Freeland, Virginia Department of Health, provided information on the Commonwealth's Medical Reserve Corps Program.

Please see the corresponding PowerPoint.

### **Meningitis Update**

Dr. Karen Remley, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Health, provided a meningitis update.

Virginia Department of Health is working with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and other states on a multi-state investigation of meningitis and strokes in patients who received spinal injections. As of October 16, 2012, the Virginia Department of Health is reporting 35 cases (32 Virginia residents and 3 West Virginia residents) with a clinical presentation consistent with fungal infection, which includes 2 fatal cases. Additional suspect cases are being investigated and the number of cases in Virginia will be updated daily. For information on national cases, please visit the CDC, <http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/outbreaks/meningitis.html>.

All infected patients received preservative-free methylprednisolone acetate among three lots which have been voluntarily recalled by the New England Compounding Center, in Framingham, Massachusetts. The Virginia Department of Health is working closely with Insight Imaging in Roanoke and New River Valley Surgery Center in Christiansburg to assist the 693 patients who received this medication via injection between June 28, 2012 and September 26, 2012. The manufacturer has recalled the implicated lots of the medication and the product is no longer being used.

### **911 Sub Panel**

Dario Marquez, Chair of the Secure Commonwealth Panel 911 Sub Panel, provided an update to the panel on their work to date.

Please see corresponding PowerPoint.

### **Health and Human Services Sub Panel**

Dr. Marissa Levine provided an update on the work of the Secure Commonwealth Panel Health and Human Services Sub Panel.

Please see corresponding PowerPoint.

Secretary Suit noted in Dr. Levine's presentation the recommendation of the Sub Panel to ask the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) to perform a study on preparedness funding. Secretary Suit pointed out that this was a great idea because she is concerned with the diminishing homeland security grant funding to state and local government for preparedness initiatives. A motion was heard from the panel to send a letter to the Chair of JLARC to recommend a study on diminishing homeland security grant funding to state and local government for preparedness initiatives. The motion was second and the panel members unanimously approved.

Secretary Suit adjourned the meeting.